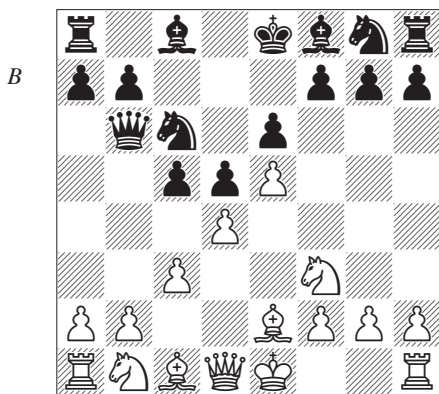


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## 2 6 ♖e2

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5 4 c3 ♘c6 5 ♗f3 ♖b6 6 ♙e2 (D)



With this White continues to develop sensibly but it lacks the aggression of 6 a3, and Black can now more easily step up the attack against d4 by transferring a knight to f5.

The two main choices are:

- A: 6...♗h6!?** 42  
**B: 6...cxd4** 44

Minor options include:

a) 6...♙d7 – 5...♙d7 6 ♙e2 ♖b6.

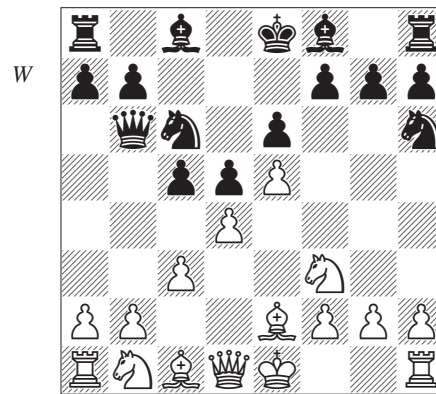
b) 6...♗ge7 7 dxc5 (a typical way of trying to punish Black for omitting the exchange on d4, but in this case not offering White anything; 7 ♗a3 ♗f5 8 ♗c2 cxd4 9 cxd4 – 6...cxd4 7 cxd4 ♗ge7 8 ♗a3 ♗f5 9 ♗c2) 7...♖xc5 (7...♖c7?! 8 ♗d4! ±) 8 ♙f4 (8 ♙d3!? ♗g6 9 ♖e2 d4 10 ♙xg6 hxg6 ∞; 8 ♗a3 ♗g6 9 ♗b5 ♖b6 10 ♙e3 ♖d8 11 0-0 ∞) 8...♗g6 9 ♙g3 ♖b6! 10 b4 ♙d7 11 ♙d3 a5 12 b5 ♗ce7 13 ♗bd2 ♗f5 14 ♖e2 a4!? with good counterplay, Benjamin-Korchnoi, Horgen 1994.

c) 6...f6 7 0-0 cxd4 8 cxd4 fxe5 9 dxe5 (the usual advice of recapturing with the knight first does not apply here, since 9 ♗xe5 can be met by 9...♖xd4) 9...g6 (there may be better moves

here, but White has the advantage anyway) 10 ♗c3 ♙g7 11 ♙e3 ♖d8 12 ♗b5 is much better for White, Ganguly-Satyapragyan, Goa jr Wch 2002.

A)

6...♗h6!?



Leaving out the exchange on d4 has the advantage of avoiding Line B2, where White has the option of playing his knight to c3.

7 ♙xh6

This is critical. Instead 7 b3 cxd4 8 cxd4 transposes to 6...cxd4 7 cxd4 ♗h6 8 b3 (Line B1), and 7 ♗a3 ♗f5 8 ♗c2 cxd4 9 cxd4 to 6...cxd4 7 cxd4 ♗ge7 8 ♗a3 ♗f5 9 ♗c2.

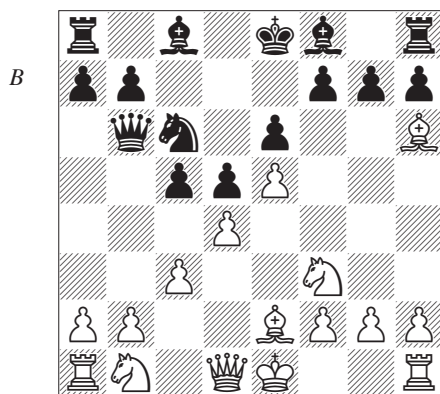
Benjamin seems to favour 7 ♙d3, which can be compared with the line 5...♗h6 6 ♙d3, only here Black has his queen on b6. It isn't clear whom this change favours. After 7...cxd4 8 cxd4 there are two options for Black:

a) 8...♗f5 9 ♙xf5 exf5 10 ♗c3 ♙e6 11 0-0 h6 12 ♗a4 ♖b5 13 ♗e1! (preparing ♙e3 and ♗d3, and intending to answer ...g5 with f4) 13...♙e7 14 ♙e3 ♖c8 15 ♗d3 b6?! (Timman queries this and suggests 15...0-0 instead) 16 ♗c3 ♖c4 (16...♖a6 17 ♗f4 ±) 17 ♖c1 g5 18 f4

g4 19 a4! ♜b4 20 ♜f2! and White is better, Timman-Andersson, Malmö 2000.

b) 8...♗d7 (this is how Black plays in the Milner-Barry Gambit, so why not here where Black has ...♜h6 as an extra move, good or bad?) 9 ♖c2 (9 0-0 ♜xd4 10 ♜xd4 ♖xd4 11 ♜c3!?) 9...♜f5 (9...f6!? – J.Watson, or 9...♜b4 =) 10 ♖xf5 exf5 11 ♜c3 ♖b4!? (11...♗e6 – 8...♜f5 9 ♖xf5 exf5 10 ♜c3 ♖e6) 12 ♖f1!? 0-0 13 ♖g1 ♖xc3 14 bxc3 ♖fc8 15 h4 ♜d8 16 ♗d2 ♖c4 looked fine for Black in Benjamin-H.Gre-tarsson, Bermuda 1999.

We now return to 7 ♖xh6 (D):



### 7...g7

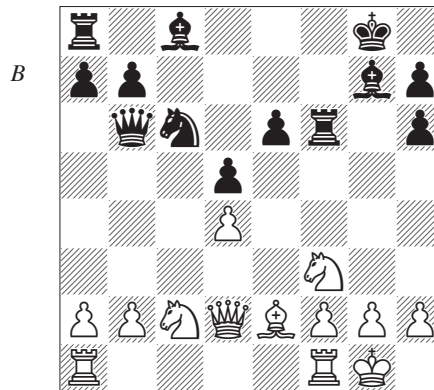
7...♖xb2? would be possible if Black had exchanged on d4 before playing ...♜h6, but here it is a fatal error in view of 8 ♖e3! ♖xa1 9 ♖c2 cxd4 10 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 (10...♗a3 11 ♜b5!) 11 ♖xd4 ♖a3 12 ♖b5+ ♖f8 13 0-0, when White wins because 13...♖b2 is met by 14 ♖c5+.

### 8 ♖d2 ♖g7 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♜a3 cxd4

The insertion of this exchange is advisable since 10...f6?! 11 exf6 ♖xf6 gives White the option of playing 12 dxc5! ♖xc5 13 b4 ♖f8 14 ♜c2 ♗d7 15 b5 ♜e7 16 ♜e5 ♖e8 17 ♜d4 with the better position for White, Kupreichik-Khuzman, Sverdlovsk 1987.

Another idea is 10...♗d7 11 ♜c2 ♖ac8 12 b4 (12 dxc5!?) 12...cxd4 13 cxd4 ♜e7 14 a4 ♖c7 15 ♖fc1 ♖c3 16 ♖d1 ♜g6, as in Rajlich-Lputian, New York 1998. Now Psakhis suggests 17 ♜e3! ♖xb4 18 ♖cb1 ♖a5 19 ♖xb7 ♖c6 20 ♖bb1 ♜f4 21 ♖b5 ±.

### 11 cxd4 f6 12 exf6 ♖xf6 13 ♜c2 (D)



White is structurally better but Black has a very active position and some straightforward plans in the form of ...♗d7-e8-g6/h5, or an exchange sacrifice on f3. White counters this by advancing his b-pawn, intending to dislodge the black knight from controlling e5.

### 13...♗d7

Black might also take measures against White's plan with 13...a5 14 ♜e3 ♗d7 15 ♜g4, and now:

a) 15...♖xf3 16 ♖xf3 ♖xd4 17 ♜xh6+ (17 ♖ad1 ±) 17...♖h8 18 ♜f7+ ♖g8 19 ♜h6+ ♖h8 20 ♜f7+ (20 ♖g5 ∞) 20...♖g8 21 ♜h6+ ♖h8 1/2-1/2 Schandorff-Antonsen, Copenhagen 1995.

b) 15...♖g6 16 ♜ge5 ♜xe5 (16...♜xd4 17 ♜xd7 ♜xf3+ 18 ♖xf3 ♖c7 19 ♖h5 ♖g5 20 g4 ♖xd7 21 f4 ♖xh5 22 g4 ±) 17 ♜xe5 ♖xe5 18 dxe5 ±.

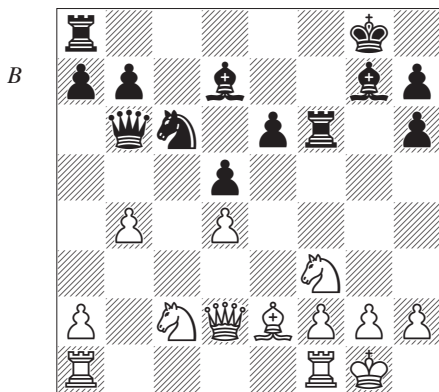
### 14 b4 (D)

Here the plan with ♜e3-g4 is probably too slow due to 14 ♜e3 ♖af8 and now 15 ♜g4 can be met by 15...♖f4.

### 14...♖af8

This is the most common but other options are also worth considering:

a) 14...♜e7 15 ♜e5 ♖a4 16 b5! ♖c8 worked well for Black in D.Howell-Kelly, Bunratty 2001 after 17 ♜e3?! ♖f4! ♖, but 17 ♜d7! ♖xc2 18 ♖b4 would have cast doubt on Black's idea, in view of 18...♖d8 19 ♜xf6+ ♖xf6 20 ♖d3 ±, or 18...♖xf2 19 ♖xf2 ♖xd4 20 ♖xe7 and White wins.

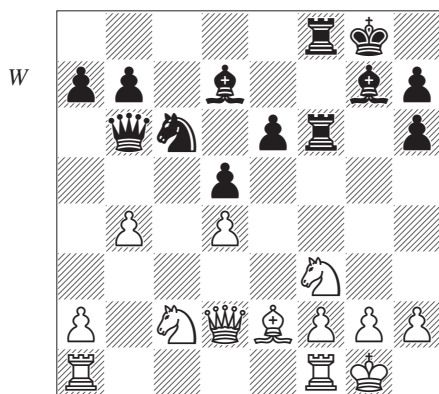


b) 14...xf3! 15 e5xf3 dxd4 16 dxd4 cxd4 17 cxd4 e8xd4 18 ac1 e8b6 held surprisingly easily for Black in Hort-Spassky, Moscow 1999 but objectively White is pressing.

c) The above idea can also be prefaced by 14...a6 15 a4 and only then 15...xf3! but again I doubt that the sacrifice is 100% correct. Instead in Savić-Antić, Yugoslav Ch (Banja Kovijaca) 2002 Black continued more cautiously with 15...ff8 but White was better after 16 a3 e8 17 e3 d7 18 a5 d6 19 e3d3.

d) 14...e8! 15 b5 d8 16 a4 (16 e5!?) 16...d7 17 d7e3 h5 18 ac1 d6 19 b4 d4 20 a5 d8 ∞ Fernando-Gdanski, Cappelle la Grande 2002.

We now return to 14...af8 (D):

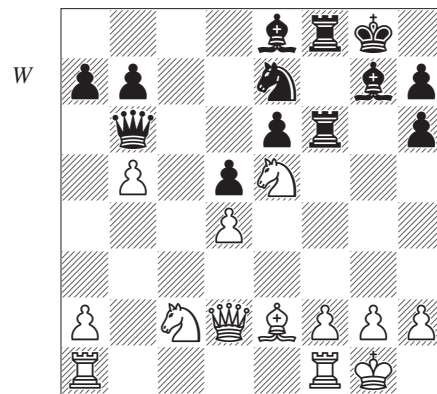


### 15 b5 d7

This is by far the most common move but 15...d5! might not be bad. Much depends on

the assessment of 16 e5 xb5 17 ab1 xe2 18 xb6 xf1 19 xe6! (in Jonkman-Tiggelman, Vlissingen 1999 White had nothing after 19 b1 xf2 20 xf2 xf2 21 xf2 a6) 19...xe6 20 xa5 c4 21 xc4 dxc4 22 d5 fe8 23 xc4 h8, which I am not sure about, but possibly is it better for White.

### 16 e5 e8 (D)



### 17 g3

This slightly weakens the kingside but White hopes to be able to support his e5 stronghold with a later f4. The move also aims at discouraging ...g6, which turned out well for Black in Adams-Lobron, Amsterdam 1994 after 17 a4 g6! 18 g4 f7 19 d6+ e6 20 xh6 d4, with strong counterplay. An interesting idea which needs further investigation is 17 e3! d6 (perhaps Black needs something else here) 18 xg6 hxg6 19 a4 f5 20 ae1 g5 21 d3 a6 22 c5 ± Thipsay-Konguvel, London 2001.

### 17...h5

Black's ...g6 plan is now less effective: 17...g6 18 g4 f7 19 d6+ e6 20 xh6 e5 21 ab1 c7 22 xb5 xc2 23 e3 ±.

### 18 a4 f5 19 a5 c7 20 ac1 d6 21 e3 e7

Black has counterplay, Kupreichik-Lautier, Belgrade 1988.

## B)

### 6...cxd4 7 cxd4 (D)